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ABSTRACT

The college internship program at the State University of New York, Fredonia, has evolved since 1975 and provides liberal arts students an opportunity to gain professional experience related to their field of study. Initial federal support permitted development of a centralized, all-campus support and administrative structure while leaving intern supervision (sponsorship) with the teaching faculty in the departments. Interns have a formal learning contract and internship handbook. The centralized internship office acts as a quality control agent, student advisor, and communication link. College policy governing internships emphasizes the crucial role of the teaching faculty as sponsors in placing, evaluating, and assessing the internships. One issue of concern in the program is the lack of a systematic, college-wide scheme for compensating sponsors, so the total real cost of the program is obscured. Attempts to link compensation with faculty development are under way as a means of guaranteeing that academic standards are maintained. (MSE)

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COLLEGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

COLLEGE AT FREDONIA

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Funds appropriated by the State of New York (annually).

Program began in 1975 and is ongoing.

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

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ABSTRACT

The model experiential education (internships) program at SUNY, Fredonia is the result of more than 15 years of growth and development. Initial support from the U.S. Office of Education permitted the development of a centralized, but minimal, all campus support and administrative structure while leaving intern supervision (sponsorship) in the hands of teaching faculty in the departments. The centralized Intern Office acts as a Quality Control agent, student advisor and communication link.

College policy governing internships emphasizes the crucial role of the teaching faculty as Sponsors in placing, evaluating and assessing the internships. The one important weakness in the scheme is the lack of a systematic, college-wide scheme for compensating Sponsors and thus the total real cost of the program is partially hidden. Attempts to link compensation with faculty development are now underway as a means to guarantee that academic standards are maintained.

INTRODUCTION

This report will cover the origins of experiential education in the form of internships at Fredonia; the importance of a 1975-80 Co-operative Education Grant from the U. S. Office of Education in helping create an institutional base for the program and initial appointment of a Director of Intern Programs; the formalization of College policy on experiential education by the Faculty Council in 1983; the development of a formal Learning Contract and Internship Handbook; growing concern about assessment and the quality of intern supervision by faculty Sponsors; a 1989 compensation and faculty development proposal and the creation in 1989 of an Experiential Education Subcommittee of our Academic Affairs Committee to help monitor the program and the Intern Office.

BACKGROUND

The College at Fredonia was originally created as a secondary academy in 1826 and became a normal school for the training of teachers in 1867. In 1948 it was incorporated into the newly created State University of New York and in the late 1960s began another transformation into a general liberal arts college and then a comprehensive university college. As part of the growth, a number of distinct departmental units were created. For example, the old Social Studies Division was separated into Departments of History, Sociology, Political Science, Economics and Psychology in the 1965-67 period.

By the early 1970s, many of the new departments began to experiment with intern or experiential education programs on a small scale. Political Science, under the chairmanship of James Soukup, began placing Interns in local government placements and affiliated with the SUNY wide Washington Semester consortium led by Brockport in 1970. Other departments had a similar experience. The late Richard Kline of the English Department began his highly successful journalism intern program in the mid-1970s.

The major boost for such programs came from two different sources. The first was a creation of a series of Public Service Concentrations (or interdisciplinary minors) in 1976 under the

leadership of the late Richard Butwell, then Dean. The purpose of the Concentrations was to combine the growing liberal arts focus of the College with the opportunity to gain practical professional experience in public service placements. A number of specific Concentrations were created based for the most part on existing courses. Of the original ten (10) Concentrations, five (5) continue to exist in 1989 (Social Work; Law, Justice & Society; International Service; Social Gerontology; Health Services Administration and Industrial Relations), and one new one was created in 1985 (Clinical Psychology Assistant). The Concentrations provided a framework within the liberal arts curriculum, to acquire the basis for positions within various professional fields. While none of the Concentrations formally require an Internship, they all encourage such placements.

The second impetus for the growth of the College intern program was receipt of a five (5) year Cooperative Education Grant from the U.S. Office of Education between 1975 and 1980. Under the direction of Dr. Jere Wysong of the Sociology Department, the Grant provided resources for the identification of possible intern placements and the creation of a single office to coordinate various departmental programs. The office created through this Grant to supervise College intern programs was also assigned responsibility for coordinating the Public Service Concentrations. While the Coordinator of Public Service Concentrations and Cooperative Education and Director of

Internships (to give the position its full, formal title) normally doesnot Sponsor or supervise Interns, the incumbent does provide a central focus for the programs; has become the major conduit for the dissemination of information about possible placements and helped to develop a number of forms (including an initial Learning Contract). Initially funded by the Office of Education, the College continued to support the Director/Coordinator position on a 1/3 time basis for a number of years and then on a 1/2 time basis beginning in the mid-1980s.

Continued growth in Intern programs led to attention from Faculty Council in 1983 and the adoption of a formal statement of College Policy which laid out the basic educational philosophy that undergirded the internship programs (credit was to be given for college level learning certified by a faculty Sponsor or supervisor, not just for experience or time spent); criteria for gaining acceptance into internship programs generally (30 hours at Fredonia; a 2.0 G.P.A.); limiting the amount of internship credit that counts toward a degree (a maximum of 24 hours); the role of the Learning Contract as the basic syllabus for an internship; guidelines establishing the minimum amount of time at a placement needed for various numbers of credit hours; and the role of the Coordinator/Director as the all-campus quality control agent and disseminator of information about possible placements. It is important to note that it was an explicit decision to place the program under faculty supervision to

emphasize the educational goals of internships rather than placing it in the Career Development Office (as found on many campuses), symbolizing a mainly vocational or employment orientation.

DESCRIPTION

The college-wide intern program at FSUC is coordinated by a half-time Director of Interns who also is responsible for overall supervision of six (6) Public Service Concentrations (or interdisciplinary minors) and for organizing a Public Service Colloquium each semester that is a required part of all the Concentrations.

GOALS:

The single most important goal of the program is to permit liberal arts students to gain professional experience related to their field of study that will help preparae them to compete in the ever changing, increasingly technological and multi-cultural world of the last part of the 20th century and the start of the 21st century.

A second major goal of the program is to insure that internships provide a college level intellectual challenge, allowing students to reflect on their classroom work, and to test themselves in the world outside the academy. While pandering to the early 1970s cry for "relevance" is NOT intended, it is hoped that our students will be able to improve their critical skills through the interaction of experience and classroom study. Attention to assessment and the role of the faculty Sponsor is a vital part of

this goal, as is also the decision to keep the internship program separate from the services offered to students by the Career Development Office.

FOCUS:

The Intern Office is responsible in whole or in part for carrying three program foci: first, it acts as a Quality Control agent to insure that intern placements are in conformity with College Policy; second, the office advises students and faculty about requirements for gaining credit for Internships; and, third, it is the major conduit for information about possible placements--locally, nationally and even internationally.

As a Quality Control agent, the Director of Internships must approve all Learning Contracts filed each semester, notify faculty and students when the information is inadequate or when deadlines have been missed, and generally monitor academic standards. When the Office sends copies of the signed Contracts to the student and the agency supervisor, evaluation forms are included to be returned to the faculty Sponsor to help insure some sort of ongoing contact among the various parties. When Contracts are not filed in a timely fashion, the Office is authorized to have the Registrar hold up registration or release of grades. Part of this function also includes periodic review and possible revision of the general Learning Contract and other

forms used in the evaluation and assessment of experiential education or internships. The creation of the Experiential Education Subcommittee as part of the College governance structure in 1989 will increase faculty monitoring of the program (and Office) and provide an initial sounding board for proposed policy or program changes.

In the case of special programs such as the Albany and Washington semester programs, the Director also acts as the campus Sponsor or liaison in conjunction with the responsible persons in these programs in Albany or Washington. Part of this responsibility includes reading regular journal and paper submissions from students enrolled in these two particular off campus programs.

As an intern advisor, the Director, secretary and peer counselor (along with faculty Sponsors in the Departments) help students to examine intern options in light of their overall academic program; to identify the educational objectives they wish to achieve in an Internship; and to suggest possible placements (always in consultation with departmental intern Sponsors). Since not all students need an internship and some should not undertake one, judgment must be exercised to determine what the best educational options might be. A series of interviews with Sponsors in the 1988-89 academic year indicated that they are quite willing to deny participation in internships if the student lacks the appropriate course background, if the student's personality does not fit the position requirements, or other

appropriate reasons in order to maintain academic standards.

Professor Len Faulk, Director between 1982 and 1987, developed the first Intern Handbook in 1984 to serve as a guide for students seeking to pursue an internship. Originally based on a similar publication at Hartwick College, the Handbook has been enlarged to include sections on locating an internship and the role of the faculty Sponsor in supervising the experience and assessing the learning and is now in its 4th edition.

The third focus of the Office is on the dissemination of information about possible intern placements. Since 1986, a computer database based on Learning Contracts has been used to keep track of placements previously held by Fredonia students and make them known to others. The database is completely reviewed every two years by a phone survey to determine which of the placements are still in existence. Copies of the complete database listing nearly 450 placements by major are available at various locations across the campus and can also be used by any student with a campus Computer users code and access to a terminal.

In addition, the Office maintains an extensive set of files on organizations that have contacted the College at one time or another or have been contacted by the College about possible internships. Announcements about these placements are sent to relevant faculty and departments whenever they are received. The

files need to be reviewed every two years or so to weed out inactive organizations.

Along with the database and files, the Office has a number of Directories listing internship on both a national and international level in a variety of disciplines. The Office also conducts periodic workshops or meetings with special groups of students such as those assisted by the EDP Office or on particular topics such as completing a Learning Contract or the Albany and Washington programs.

The Office is assisted in these activities by a student Peer Counselor who works 8-9 hours a week to assist the Director. The Peer Counselor is usually drawn from the ranks of former interns, especially those with off campus experience in Albany or Washington.

SCOPE:

The scope of the program supervised by the Internship Office is college-wide at the undergraduate level, with only three significant experiential education offerings falling beyond in purview in their entirety or partially. The biggest, of course, is the College student teaching program, supervised by the Office of Field Experiences in the Department of Education. The second is Medical Technology in the Department of Biology. Both of these are entirely independent of the Intern Office and the

College policy it administers. The third program is Social Work in the Department of Sociology. For historical reasons, it is governed by College Policy, but not subject to supervision by the Intern Office.

Including Medical Technology and Social Work, 1,761 students have

TABLE I

INTERNSHIP CREDIT HOUR DISTRIBUTION, 1981-1989

INTERNSHIP CREDIT HOURS	STUDENTS		TOTAL CREDIT HOURS EARNED	
	NO.	%	NO.	%
1	81	4.5%	81	0.7%
2	48	2.7	96	0.8
3	679	38.0	2,037	17.0
4	53	3.0	212	1.7
5	25	1.4	125	1.0
6	352	19.0	2,112	17.0
7	23	1.3	161	1.3
8	10	0.5	80	0.7
9	175	9.9	1,575	13.0
10	15	0.9	150	1.2
11	5	0.3	55	0.5
12	76	4.3	912	7.5
13	4	0.2	52	0.4
14	3	0.2	42	0.3
15	105	5.9	1,575	13.0
16	5	0.3	80	0.7
17	2	0.1	34	0.3
18	14	0.8	252	2.1
21	3	0.2	63	0.5
24	1	0.1	24	0.2
30	82	4.6	2,460	20.0
TOTALS	1,761	100.0	12,178	100.0

had internships of one sort or another at Fredonia between the spring semester, 1981 and the spring term, 1989, generating an average of 6.9 credit hours each. TABLE I shows the number of students enrolled for internships at various credit hour levels (1-30) and the total credit hours thus generated. The figures show that only 219 students earned more than 12 (10%) credit hours for internships of the 120 hours required for a degree, well short of the 24 hours allowed by College Policy. The 82 students receiving 30 credit hours each are all Medical Technology students enrolled for a fifth or clinical year of training at a teaching hospital. If Medical Technology and Social Work are excluded, there have been between 60 and 120 interns per semester (counting both summer sessions as a single semester) for the past 2 years. The scope of the program across the College is suggested by the data in TABLE II which lists the number of Interns by curriculum for the spring of 1987 through the fall of 1988 (including the summers of 1987 and 1988). Internships are offered in most Fredonia curricula, but 9 dominate: Business Administration, Communications, Accounting, Sociology, Political Science, English, Computer Science, Psychology, and Economics collectively offer 90% of the total. The high proportion of interns drawn from professional programs such as as Business (27.3%), Communications (20.6%), and Accounting (10.1%) partially undercuts the goal of the program to provide experiential education opportunities for students in the liberal arts, but there is no indication of a shortage of

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNSHIPS BY CURRICULUM

CURR. CODE	CURRICULUM NAME	GRADE POINT AVERAGE: UNDER 2.5 No.	UNDER 2.5 %	2.5 OR OVER No.	2.5 OR OVER %	UNKNOWN No.	UNKNOWN %	TOTALS No.	TOTALS %
000	UNDECLARED	2	40%	3	60%	-	-%	5	0.8%
100	EL. EDUC.	1	25	3	75	-	-	4	0.6
101	EARLY CHILD. ED.	-	-	2	100	-	-	2	0.4
120	ENGLISH EDUC.	-	-	3	100	-	-	3	0.5
125	SOC.STUD.EDUC.	-	-	1	100	-	-	3	0.5
152	MUSIC EDUC.	-	-	1	100	-	-	1	0.2
201	BFA(ART)	-	-	1	100	-	-	1	0.2
202	ART	-	-	1	100	-	-	1	0.2
203	ENGLISH	12	40	18	60	-	-	30	7.4
207	PSYCHOLOGY	2	8	22	92	-	-	24	4.4
214	POLITICAL SCI.	10	31	22	69	-	-	32	5.7
215	SOCIOLOGY	8	21	30	79	-	-	38	6.3
216	ECONOMICS	9	56	7	44	-	-	16	2.9
221	MATHEMATICS	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	0.2
226	CHEMISTRY	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	0.2
230	THEATER ARTS	2	67	1	33	-	-	3	0.5
235	INDUSTRIAL MGMT.	-	-	1	100	-	-	1	0.2
237	BUSINESS ADMIN.	40	27	106	62	1	1	147	27.3
238	ACCOUNTING	10	18	45	82	-	-	55	10.1
241	COMPUTER SCIENCE	5	17	24	83	-	-	29	5.3
242	COMMUNICATIONS	34	31	77	69	-	-	111	20.6
300	SPEC.STUD.(BA)	2	33	4	67	-	-	6	1.0
301	SPEC.STUD.(BS)	2	29	5	71	-	-	7	1.2
315	SPEC.STUD.(GEN)	2	22	5	55	2	22	9	1.6
347	SOUND RECORD	1	17	5	83	-	-	6	1.0
	MAJOR UNKNOWN	-	-	2	67	1	33	3	0.5
	TOTALS	145	27%	389	72.3%	4	0.7%	538	100.0%

placements for those students if they want them (regardless of field).

STAFFING AND COSTS:

Direct program costs include half the salary of the faculty Coordinator/Director; half to a third of the salary for the shared secretary, and funds for the peer counselor position (about $800-$950/year). The level of secretarial support is somewhat lower than it was prior to 1988 and has led to a reduction in the services available through the Intern Office, especially the updating of the Intern database. Other direct costs include funds for clerical supplies such as telephone service, copying announcements, printing forms, purchasing directories, and membership in the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIEE) and the New York State Cooperative and Experiential Education Association (NYSCEEA). Some limited travel funds are also available. The average budget for all these activities in the past two years has been about $2,600/year in addition to the Peer Counselor's stipend. Unseen costs include office space for the Director, secretary and program reference materials.

Individual departments incur costs when they compensate faculty for sponsoring interns, but practice varies from department to

TABLE III

INTERN ENROLLMENT & DEPARTMENTAL WORKLOAD

REPORTED NO. OF INTERNS	INCLUDED IN NORMAL WORKLOAD		
	NO	YES	SUMMER STIPEND
1	9	5	-
2	5	1	-
3	-	2	-
4	-	1	1
5 - 10	1	1	2
11 - 15	-	1	-
16 plus	-	2	-
OTHER	2	-	-
TOTAL	17	13	3

department. In some, sponsorship is included as part of the regular faculty work load with the most obvious result that other courses or sections of courses are not available. Some pay Sponsors a summer stipend as partial compensation (but the faculty are then expected to Sponsor interns in the summer as well). But in others, sponsorship is taken on without compensation and in addition to the normal workload. The impact of this variation is shown in TABLE III. Not surprisingly, lack of compensation is related to lower numbers of interns being sponsored.

If we look at the question of sponsorship compensation in particular departments, a varied pattern is again seen as shown in TABLE IV. The lack of uniform policies from department to

TABLE IV

INTERN GRADING & WORKLOAD PRACTICES BY DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT OR CURRICULUM	GRADING PRACTICES			INCLUDED IN WORKLOAD		
	S/U	A-E	Varies	NO	YES	SUMMER STIPEND
Accounting	4	-	-	2	1	1
Art	-	1	-	1	-	-
Art Admin.	-	1	-	-	1	-
Business Admin.	3	-	1	2	2	-
Chemistry	-	2	-	2	-	-
Communications	2	-	-	-	1	1
Economics	-	-	1	-	1	-
Education	1	1	1	2	1	-
English	-	1	1	-	2	-
Learning Center	-	-	1	-	-	1
Music/Sound Record.	-	2	-	1	1	-
Political Science	2	-	-	2	-	-
Psychology	1	2	-	1	2	-
Sociology	3	-	2	3	1	-
Theater Arts	-	1	1	1	-	-
TOTALS	16	11	8	17	13	3

department and even within departments make it difficult to assess the precise costs to each and it leaves room for exploitation (with consent) of those faculty willing to sponsor interns without compensation (e.g. see Frank Krohn, "Getting Your Students Involved in Tourism Marketing," MARKETING NEWS [3 July 1987], p. 26). Obviously, faculty teaching overloads under these circumstances add to the total number of student credit hours being generated, thus helping to fill (especially in public institutions) budget office requirements about the number of FTEs being served. Instead of costing the institution, they are

making a personal contribution (frequently unrecognized by them or the institution). The impact this may have on the quality of intern supervision, evaluation and assessment is still under investigation. A proposal for a more systematic pattern of compensation along with faculty development training is currently under consideration.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the program can be viewed in a number of ways. The number of students earning internship credit since 1981, the average number of credit hours earned, and the total credit hours (see TABLE I) is quite impressive. It would take about 811 Full Time students or about 100 FTE students per calendar year to generate the 12,173 credit hours earned by the interns.

The quality of students undertaking an internship generally is good. As shown in TABLE II, nearly three-quarters of the interns had a 2.5 G.P.A. or higher before starting the experience. And while the G.P.A. has significant limitations as a real measure of what a student has learned, it is the currency of the realm and we have few comparable alternatives. The degree to which internships contribute to grade inflation is unclear. Some faculty grade on an A-E basis; some use a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) system; while others vary their practice (see TABLE IV).

When viewed from off campus, Fredonia interns also do well according to surveys taken in the spring of 1988 (by the Business Administration Department for Business and Accounting Interns) and in the fall of 1988 (by the Intern Office for all other majors) as shown in TABLE V. The response of placement supervisors is overwhelmingly positive and is supplemented by

further requests for additional interns from many of these same

TABLE V

AGENCY SUPERVISOR EVALUATION OF INTERNS

RESPONSE	BUSINESS & ACCOUNTING		ALL OTHERS	
	No.	%	No.	%
Outstanding	6.5	27%	9	35%
Very Good	15.5	65	12	46
Average	1	4	4	15
Marginal	-	-	-	-
Unsatisfactory	-	-	1	4
No Reply	1	4	-	-
TOTALS	24	100%	26	100%

organizations and job offers to students following the experience (especially in the private sector). But it must be admitted that we lack systematic data on the assessment by faculty of what is learned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the model intern program at Fredonia, a number of recommendations can be offered:

1. Campus intern programs need a centralized Quality Control agency to seek to insure equivalent standards across the campus.

2. There needs to be an agreed statement of college policy regarding both the philosophy of experiential education AND the institutional procedures for implementing it.

3. The role of teaching faculty within Departments acting as Sponsors (and assessors) has to be emphasized to avoid overemphasis on vocationalism and the creation of yet another separate Department.

4. Without specifying some artificially high G.P.A. threshold for admittance to an internship, care needs to be taken to insure that students have the requisite background for the placement.

5. There needs to be careful monitoring of the number of credit hours earned by individual students in internships to insure that they have not supplanted traditional methods of instruction and learning.

6. Students need to be continually advised and counseled about how and why an internship is NOT just a job, but an EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE.

7. Particular attention has to be given to the question of Sponsor compensation and faculty development to insure a high level of intern supervision, evaluation and assessment.

8. Because many placements cut across disciplinary lines, a centralized channel for disseminating information is important in assuring potential access for all students.